

Message Text

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44

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 IO-10 SAB-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7542

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PBOR, IS, JO

SUBJECT: ADDITIONAL SETTLEMENT ACTIVITY IN WEST BANK

1. SUMMARY. GUSH EMUNIM TOLD PRESS NOV 19 OF PLAN FOR RENEWED ATTEMPTS TO ESTABLISH ADDITIONAL JEWISH SETTLEMENTS IN WEST BANK, WITH OR WITHOUT GOI APPROVAL. CONFIRMED EARLIER REPORTS THAT 17 FAMILIES NOW LIVING IN "WORK CAMP" AT OFRA, NORTHEAST OF RAMALLAH. MEANWHILE FOUR MAYORS OF SOUTHERN WEST BANKTOWNS HAVE PROTESTED ISRAELI PLANS TO FENCE IN AND EVENTUALLY TAKE OVER SMALL VILLAGE OF BEIT ISKARIA, SOUTH OF BETHLEHEM, NEAR ETZION BLOC. END SUMMARY.

2. LARGE-SCALE SETTLEMENT ATTEMPTS IN OCCUPIED TERRITORIES ARE SOON TO BE RESUMED BY GUSH EMUNIM IN WEST BANK ACCORDING TO STATEMENTS TO PRESS REPORTED IN ISRAELI MEDIA NOV 18 AND 19. THIS LARGELY RELIGIOUSLY-MOTIVATED GROUP IS SAME ONE THAT HAS BEEN BEHIND PAST MAJOR EFFORTS TO CREATE NEW SETTLEMENTS WITHOUT GOI APPROVAL. GROUP SAYS RECENT MEETINGS

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WITH PRIME, DEFENSE AND POLICE MINISTERS HAVE BEEN "DISAPPOINTING"

AND IT HAS DECIDED CARRY OUT PLANS EVEN IN FACE OF PROBABLE GOVERNMENT OPPOSITION.

3. GUSH CLAIMS TO HAVE 535 FAMILIES ORGANIZED INTO SIX SECTIONS AND ITS PLANS CALL FOR 200 FAMILIES TO SETTLE IN "WESTERN SAMARIA", 80 NEAR NABLUS, 50 NEAR JERICHO, AND 20 IN DOTHAN VALLEY SOUTHWEST OF JENIN. THERE ARE 35 FAMILIES IN "SHILOH" GROUP, 17 OF WHICH GUSH SPOKESMAN CONFIRMED ARE ALREADY LIVING IN "WORK CAMP" AT OFRA, NORTHEAST OF RAMALLAH, WHICH EARLIER REPORTS HAVE INDICATED WAS BECOMING DE FACTO SETTLEMENT ALTHOUGH DEFMIN CLAIMS TO HAVE SIMPLY AUTHORIZED WORKERS AT NEARBY MILITARY INSTALLATION TO LIVE THERE. (SEE JERUSALEM 1159, PARA 4, AND TEL AVIV 3880). OF 150 FAMILIES SAID TO BE PLANNING TO RESIDE AT MAALE (MISHOR) ADUMIM, INDUSTRIAL SITE EAST OF JERUSALEM, 17 SCHEDULED TO MOVE THERE IN EARLY DECEMBER, WITH GOI APPROVAL. (WE UNDERSTAND ONLY COUPLES WITHOUT CHILDREN AUTHORIZED FOR MAALE ADUMIM WHERE RECENTLY-CONSTRUCTED WORKERS' HOUSING UNITS VERY SMALL, BUT GUSH EMUNIM HAS PRESSED IN PAST FOR REGULAR FAMILY HOUSEING AS WELL.)

4. GUSH EMUNIM SPOKESMAN ASSERTS SETTLEMENT ACTIVITY IS PROPER RESPONSE TO RECENT ANTI-ZIONIST UN RESOLUTION AND GROUP PRESUMABLY HOPES STRONG EMOTIONS AROUSED OVER THIS ISSUE WILL MAKE IT MORE DIFFICULT FOR GOVERNMENT TO OPPOSE ITS ACTIONS.

5. LOCAL ARABIC PRESS REPORTED NOV 19 PROTEST TELEGRAM SENT TO VARIOUS GOI LEADERS AND MILGOVT BY MAYORS OF BETHLEHAM, BEIT JALA, BEIT SAHOUR AND HEBRON RE PLANS TO FENCE IN LANDS AND HOMES OF RESIDENTS OF BEIT ISKARIA, SMALL VILLAGE SOUTH OF BETHLEHEM, NEAR ETZION BLOC. MILGOVT HAS REPORTEDLY TOLD VILLAGERS THEY WILL BEGIN ENCIRCLING AREA WITH BARBED WIRE WITHIN TWO WEEKS IN PREPARATION FOR EXPROPRIATION. USE OF FARM LAND BY RESIDENTS TO CEASE AT THAT TIME, AND EVACUATION OF HOMES TO BE REQUIRED AT LATER STAGE. WHILE REASON FOR THIS MOVE NOT OFFICIALLY ANNOUNCED, PROXIMITY OF AREA TO ETZION BLOC WOULD INDICATE LAND TO BE TAKEN OVER BY JEWISH SETTLERS THERE, PROBABLY IN CONNECTION WITH FOURTH SETTLEMENT IN BLOC (MOSHAVE ELAZAR), WHICH NOW ABOUT READY FOR ACCUPANCY. ACCORDING TO BETHLEHEM MAYOR ELIAS FREIJ, ONCE AREA FENCED, VILLAGERS WILL BE SUBJECT TO SECURITY CONTROLS UPON ENTERING AND EXITING AREA. FOUR MAYORS HAVE ASKED ISRAELI LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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AUTHORITIES TO RESCIND DECISION.

6. COMMENT. CONTINUED JEWISH SETTLEMENT ON WEST BANK IS SOURCE OF MAJOR CONCERN ON PART OF ARAB RESIDENTS AND RECURRENT THEME IN DISCUSSIONS OF LEADERS WITH CONGEN REPRESENTATIVES. LATEST GUSH EMUNIM ANNOUNCEMENT WILL CERTAINLY FEED THIS CONCERN. DESPITE GOI ACTIONS IN PAST TO FOIL GUSH EFFORTS TO SET UP NEW SETTLMENTS, WEST BANKERS GENERALLY CONVINCED THAT ISRAELIS

INTEND TO EXPAND SETTLEMENT ACTIVITY AND TAKE OVER MORE AND MORE
LAND. DEVELOPMENT OF MAALE ADUMIN, UNAUTHORIZED BY DE FACTO
ESTABLISHMENT OF SETTLEMENT AT OFRA, AND ACTION AT BEIT ISKARIA
BOLSTER ARAB CONVICTION THAT ISRAEL HAS NO INTENTION OF
RELINQUISHING CONTROL OF AT LEAST MAJOR PORTION OF WEST BANK.
MOST WEST BANKERS ALSO VIEW FAILURE OF US TO COMMENT ON
SETTLEMENT ACTIVITY AS EVIDENCE OF OUR TACIT SUPPORT FOR THIS
ACTIVITY AND WHAT THEY PERCEIVE TO BE ISRAELI LONG-TERM
INTENTIONS.
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